

# Code of Conduct – Ivychurch Parish Council

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You are a member or co-opted member of Ivychurch Parish Council and hence you shall have regard to the following principles - **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership**. See Appendix 1 below for the standards of personal behaviour expected of you when dealing with your fellow Councillors and Officers.

You have a duty to attend meetings but sometimes things crop up and you are unable to make it. You must contact the clerk with an apology and explanation. A darts match is not an adequate excuse whereas illness or work commitments are acceptable reasons. If you fail to attend any meetings for six months, you will automatically cease to be a councillor unless the council approved your reason for absence before the end of the six month period.

You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the following requirements, by leadership and example.

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member:

1. You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.
2. You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
3. When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit.
4. You are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.
5. You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.
6. You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties, and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out below.
7. You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

## **Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests**

8. You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil

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partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living as a husband of wife, or as if you were civil partners.

9. In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests which your authority has decided should be included in the register.

10. If an interest has not been entered onto the authority's register you must disclose the interest to any meeting of authority at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a sensitive interest.

11. Following any disclosure of an interest which is not on the authority's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

12. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions your authority places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by your authority.

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*This Code of Conduct was adopted by the Parish Council at a meeting of the Council*

*held on 19th May 2016*

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## Appendix 1: Standards of personal behaviour expected from Councillors and Officers

### 1. Background

1.1 The relationship between Councillors and Officers is an essential ingredient that should contribute to the successful working of the Council. This relationship within the authority should be characterised by mutual respect, informality and trust. Councillors and Officers must feel free to speak to one another openly and honestly. Nothing in this Appendix is intended to change this relationship. Objective criticism is usually acceptable but can be unacceptable if the criticism becomes personal. This Appendix gives guidance on what to do on the rare occasions when things go wrong.

1.2 Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at all times. Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and should not be tolerated within the Council.

### 2. What is bullying and harassment?

2.1 Examples and definitions of what may be considered bullying and harassment are provided below for guidance. For practical purposes those making a complaint usually define what they mean by bullying or harassment – something has happened to them that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If Councillors or Officers complain they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition.

### 3. How can bullying and harassment be recognised?

3.1 There are many definitions of bullying and harassment. Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

3.2 Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

3.3 Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment but it is sometimes the "grey" areas that cause most problems. Examples of what is unacceptable behaviour include:

“inappropriate behaviour”; intimidation/humiliation; excessive criticism; autocratic/dictatorial behaviour shouting; browbeating; haranguing; swearing; ridiculing; expressions of intolerance; general discourtesy .

3.4 Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face, they may be by written communications, e-mail (so called "flame mail") and telephone.

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## **4. Why does the Council need to take action on bullying and harassment?**

4.1 Where the Parish Council is aware of a situation of bullying or harassment of one of its members by another, it must take steps to address the problem.

4.2 A Parish Council's duty of care to its members relates to all forms of personal injury, which will include mental as well as physical health. If a risk to health was foreseeable but no action was taken then the Parish Council could be at fault and compensation could be sought.

## **5. Personal Behaviours required of Council Members**

5.1 Members are obliged by this Code of Conduct to:

- \* promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person;
- \* treat others with respect;
- \* not do anything which compromises or which is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

5.2 A proven allegation of bullying or harassment will always be a breach of the Code of Conduct and the Member involved is liable to be dismissed from the Council with immediate effect.

5.3 If there are instances of bullying or harassment by Members towards officers or other Members, then it is the duty of those Members who are aware of the incident to report it to the Council.

5.4 If members or officers do witness incidents of bullying or harassment, the Council should agree on an appropriate course of action, or if unsure what to do they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.